Telephone Facility at Local Call Rates

†3152. SHRI JANARDAN DWIVEDI :
SHRI MOTILAL VORA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering to provide the telephone facility at local call rates throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would provide such facility on mobile phones also; and

(d) if so, by when the said facility would be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD) : (a) to (d) While the Government is working towards One India Call Rate, the proposed measure is at initial stage. No time frame has been fixed for the same.

Broad Band Policy

3153. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the present Broad Band Policy of Government;

(b) whether any progress has been made in penetration of broad band, internet and personal computer in the country as a result of the new Broad Band Policy;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(d) whether it is fact that India still lags very much behind countries like China in penetration of broad band, internet and personal computers; and

(e) if so, the details of the steps proposed to be taken in this regard including comparative figures of India and China in this regard?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The salient features of Broadband Policy 2004 are given in the statement (*See* below):

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details of progress of Internet, Broadband and Personal Computers (PCs) are available only on All India bases. As per the available information, the subscriber base of Internet Services achieved a growth rate of 1.91% during the quarter January- March, 2005 whereas the number of Broadband subscribers have shown a growth of 690% during six months (January-June, 2005) following the announcement of Broadband Policy in October, 2004. The Personal Computer (PC) population in the country has increased from 11 million during March, 2004 to 14.5 million during March, 2005.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The Broadband Policy Framework visualizes creation of Broadband infrastructure through various access technologies like Optical Fibre, Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) on copper loop, Cable TV Network, Satellite Media and Terrestrial Wireless.

As per the available information, the Internet and Broadband subscriber base of India and China (as on December, 2004) is as under:

(in thousands)

	Broadband	Internet
China	42800	94000
India	50	5450

Statement

Salient Features of Broadband Policy 2004

1. Definition and Targets:

Broadband has been defined as and always- on data connection supporting interactive services including Internet access with minimum download speed of 256 Kbps per subscriber. The new broadband policy aims to target three million broadband subscribers and six million Internet

subscribers with a timeframe of December 2005. By the end of year 2010, the policy aims to target 20 million broadband subscribers and 40 million Internet subscribers.

2.0 Technology Options for Broadband Services

The Broadband Policy Framework visualizes creation of infrastructure through various access technologies which can contribute to growth and can mutually coexist. Spread of infrastructure is a must for healthy competition and therefore it would be the endeavour of the Government that the telecommunication infrastructure growth in the country is not compromised in any manner.

2.1 Various access technologies, inter-alia, are:

(a) Optical Fibre Technologies:

With the increase in commercial availability of fibre technologies, the cost of fibre rollout is approaching the cost of other wired networks. Spread of optical fibre networks shall be emphasized keeping in view the long-term perspective.

(b) Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) on copper loop:

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) as well as other access providers are expected to aggressively use their copper loop infrastructure for providing Broadband services through this technology.

Recognising that last mile copper loop is not a 'bottleneck facility' for broadband services, access providers shall be free to enter into mutually agreed commercial arrangements for utilization of available copper loop for expansion of broadband services. The owner of local loop shall be free to decide the areas in which investment is to be made to upgrade the infrastructure for Broadband sevices. The information regarding the areas in which Broadband services are being offered by a service provider shall be available in the public domain.

Further, use of brand-name being treated as a part of the value shall be permitted in such commercial arrangements.

Management of BSNL and MTNL has decided to provide 1.5 million connections by the end of 2005. The corporate/work plan of these Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) have been drawn up for this purpose.

Thereafter, annual plan for expansion of Broadband services by BSNL and MTNL will be determined in consultation with them. A quarterly review of their performance by the Government in the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) shall be undertaken to evaluate the achievement and redefine the future roadmap, if necessary.

It is hoped that other access services providers would also provide broadband connections using their copper in a targeted manner. A constructive review of their performance shall also be undertaken.

(c) Cable TV Network

Cable TV network can be used as franchisee network of the service provider for provisioning Broadband services. However, all responsibilities for ensuring compliance of terms and conditions of the licence shall vest with the Licensee. The terms of franchise agreement between Licensee and his franchisee shall be settled mutually by negotiation between the two parties involved.

(d) Satellite Media

Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) and Direct-to-Home(DTH) services would be encouraged for penetration of Broadband and Internet services with the added advantage to serve remote and inaccessible areas.

Department of Telecommunications, in consultation with the concerned Ministries, will soon propose measures in the direction of Open Sky Policy for VSAT operators. The role of Department of Space (DoS) is critical in such an endeavour.

To keep pace with technological advances, throughput and antenna size for VSAT shall be periodically reviewed.

Commercial VSAT service providers having internet service provider (ISP) licence shall be permitted use of same hub station and remote station to provide Internet service directly to the subscribers. Further, this remote station shall be permitted to be used as a distribution point to provide Internet services to multiple independent subscribers. Necessary amendments in the licence agreement shall be carried out immediately.

DTH service providers shall be permitted to provide Receive Only Internet Service after obtaining Internet Service Providers (ISP) licence from Department of Telecommunications. Further, ISP licensees shall

be permitted to allow customers for downloading data through DTH after obtaining necessary permission from the competent authority. DTH Service providers will also be permitted to provide bidirectional Internet services after obtaining VSAT and ISP licence from DoT.

(e) Terrestrial Wireless

Recognising that terrestrial wireless is another upcoming technology platform for Broadband, it has been decided in principle to de-licence 2.40-2.48 GHz band for low-power outdoor use of non-protection, non-interference and non-exclusive basis. Necessary notification shall be issued.

To accelerate penetration of Broadband and Internet, the 5.15-5.35 GHz band shall be de-licensed for the indoor use of low power Wi-Fi systems. For outdoor use, the band 5.25-5.35GHz shall be de-licensed in consultation with DoS and delicensing in the band 5.15-5.25GHz would be considered after the process of vacation. Alternative spectrum bands which are not in high usage and could be deployed for Broadband services, shall also be explored and identified.

2.2 Quality of Service (QoS)

TRAI would be requested to prescribe QoS parameters for provisioning of broadband service using various access technologies at an early date.

2.3 Simplification of Standing Advisory Committee on Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA)/Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) clearance:

The VSAT operators shall be allowed to start the installation process for VSAT terminals after a period of one month of submitting all relevant documents to WPC for SACFA/WPC clearance wherever the total height of such installation is less than 5 meters above the rooftop of an authorized building.

In the case of Receive Only VSAT terminals and DTH with Receive Only Internet, no SACFA/WPC clearance will be required wherever the total height of such installation is less than 5 meters above the rooftop of an authorized building.

Government have decided that the reference to Wireless in local Loop (WLL) in IND49 of National Frequency Allocation Plan (NFAP)-2002 shall be deleted to promote use of indigenously developed technologies.

This would enable service providers, other than basic service operators, to use the 1880-1900 MHz band for provision of various services under their licence.

A transparent scheme is being outlined separately for time-bound frequency allocation, sitting clearance and wireless licensing by removing the cumbersome procedures, computerization and by setting predetermined standards.

3.0 Other salient features:

- National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) has been set up by DIT, Government of India to ensure that Internet traffic, originating and destined for India, should be routed within India. It is expected that NIXI will take appropriate steps for increasing the utilization of such facilities.
- The Government has assigned a very high priority to indigenous manufacture of broadband related equipments and shall endeavour to work closely with the concerned ministries and manufacturers associations so that the equipments are made available at an affordable price.
- DOT is conscious of the fact that Broadband services can reach the urban and rural consumers only if services are offered at affordable and easy terms. Department of Telecommunications will work out a package in consultation with Ministry of Finance and relaed Departments as well as concerned service providers to achieve this.

Revival of Indian Telephone Industries, Bangalore

3154. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state the steps taken by Government for the revival of the Indian Telephone Industries, Bangalore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The salient steps taken by the Government for revival of Indian Telephone Industries, Bangalore are as under: